



File Code: 1950

Date: May 19, 2014

Dear Interested Public:

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest (Forest), Trinity River Management Unit is re-initiating the scoping process on a revised proposal to expand the existing communication site on Ironside Mountain instead of moving the communication site to a different location on Ironside Mountain. This letter includes information on the need for action, a description of the proposal and the input requested from you. I encourage your participation in this planning process.

Background

The original proposal for the expansion of the Ironside Mountain Communication Site was to move the existing facilities from one location to a new location along the ridge line for better line of sight capabilities for wireless communication infrastructure. After scoping comments were received, information regarding the project's relationship to cultural resources was brought to my attention that resulted in modifications to the original proposed action and the need to re-initiate the public scoping process.

The Forest Service has received multiple requests from Wi-Fi providers, Trinity County Sheriff's Department and the Trinity County Office of Education to improve and provide additional communication technologies from Ironside Mountain.

Trinity County emergency services have two repeaters on Ironside Mountain near the fire detection lookout that become inoperable during the winter months because they get buried in the snow. Expansion of the existing communications site would allow their emergency radio repeaters to be operational continuously throughout the year.

The State of California has recently started to require schools to conduct their student assessment testing on-line. Because of this requirement, and the amount of students at the Burnt Ranch School, they do not have enough capacity through their existing T-1 line to meet this demand. They have also indicated that there are periods of time when their land line phones do not operate putting their students and facility at risk during emergency situations. Because of these concerns, the Trinity County Office of Education has asked the Forest Service about the possibilities of pursuing the opportunities for Wi-Fi and cellular service from Ironside Mountain.

The lease holder on Ironside Mountain, Pacific Wholesale Materials (PWM), Inc., has expressed a commitment in providing adequate communication technologies for public safety and educational purposes. Because of PWM's commitment and the requests the Forest Service has received, PWM recently submitted a revised proposal that would expand the infrastructure at the existing communication site (see attachments). Although the existing site is lower in elevation than the original proposal, it is anticipated that the site can provide reception for wireless communication and provide service for a variety of other communication technologies. This



expanded development will allow for the public safety repeaters to remain operational during the winter months increasing emergency services and public safety. In addition, the expansion of this existing communications site will allow for Wi-Fi and cellular infrastructure. PWM and the Forest Service understand that it has been a longstanding priority for Trinity County to have the opportunities for better communication and internet options available to the surrounding communities and members of the public promoting positive social and economic benefits.

Planning Area Location and Characterization

The legal location of this project is in the Southeast ¼ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 1, Township 5 North, Range 6 East, Humboldt Meridian. The elevation of Ironside Mountain is 5,255 feet above sea level.

The project area is within the Trinity River (#15) Management Area of the Shasta-Trinity Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).¹ The project area is within the Adaptive Management Area with a LRMP prescription of Roaded Recreation². Ironside Mountain is a designated electronic site in the LRMP.³

Ironside Mountain is included in the National Register of Historic Places because of its traditional and well-documented spiritual importance to local Tribes.

In general, a need for action is identified by comparing the existing conditions in an area to desired future conditions as defined by direction of the Forest Plan and requirements of other applicable laws and public policies.

Currently, the existing infrastructure at the existing communication site is not capable of meeting the line of site necessary for wireless communications infrastructure nor does it allow for the emergency services radio repeaters to remain operational during the winter months. The purpose and need for the project is to effectively and safely serve the public and Forest Service work force by providing for year-round operational emergency service repeaters, cellular service and wireless communications to Trinity County⁴

The revised proposed action is to amend PWM, Inc.'s current Communication Use Lease to allow for the expansion of the existing communications site. This action also authorizes a new Communication Use Lease for a new 20-year term upon the expiration of the existing lease on December 31, 2016.

The revised development of the existing site will be completed in phases. The first phase will consist of installing a self-supporting three sided lattice tower to accommodate all of the existing users and potential tenants. The existing equipment shelter and wooden antenna pole will remain on site. Electrical power at the site initially will be solar panels attached to the tower with battery packs, because currently there is no commercial electrical power or telephone service on Ironside Mountain. The second phase will consist of an additional equipment shelter, a bank of

¹ Shasta-Trinity Land and Resource Management Plan, 1995. Pages 4-141 – 4-143.

² Shasta-Trinity Land and Resource Management Plan, 1995. Page 4-64.

³ Shasta-Trinity Land and Resource Management Plan, 1995. Page 4-21.

⁴ Shasta-Trinity Land and Resource Management Plan, 1995. Pages 4-4, 4-17 and 4-21.

solar panels and a power generation system that will include a generator and fuel supply system. This environmental analysis will analyze both phases of the project.

The following new infrastructure is being proposed at the existing site upon build out:

First phase:

- 120-foot lattice self-supporting steel tower made of non-reflective metal and/or painted dark brown on an 18-foot by 18-foot concrete foundation;
- Up to two 3 to 4-foot diameter microwave dishes painted gray or dark brown for Wi-Fi functionality;
- Antennas;
- Three solar panels measuring 3-feet by 6-feet mounted at approximately 40-feet from the bottom of the tower structure for the emergency service repeaters and Wi-Fi power;

Second phase:

- Extend tower 20 more feet for a total tower height of 140-feet;
- Up to two microwave dishes measuring up to 6-feet in diameter painted gray or dark brown mounted at 20-feet from the bottom of the tower structure for cellular functionality;
- Antennas;
- An addition equipment shelter measuring 8-feet by 16-feet in size painted dark brown or made of exposed brown aggregate;
- An 8-foot by 12-foot bank of solar panels;
- Two 1,000 gallon propane tanks;
- Six-foot tall security fence made of non-reflective material.

Forest Service policy encourages co-location of equipment to consolidate communication uses and to facilitate the orderly development of communication sites⁵. To facilitate this, the two stand-alone emergency public safety radio repeaters that are currently located adjacent to the Ironside Mountain fire detection lookout will be moved to the existing communication site.

The existing site has been previously disturbed and encumbering 0.10 acres. The expansion of the site will increase in size to encumber approximately 0.115 acres (5,009-feet by 5,009-feet). Some vegetation will need to be removed to improve signal strength and to clear the area of brush, tree boles and stumps.

The following equipment is anticipated to be used during construction:

- Excavator and/or backhoe;
- Cement truck;
- Boom truck and/or crane;
- Passenger pick-up trucks.

Your Involvement

I invite you to participate in the NEPA process by providing comments during the public scoping period. If you have information you feel the Forest Service may not be aware of regarding the potential effects of this project, please provide written comments by mail, fax or in-person to the

⁵ Forest Service Handbook 2709.11 Chapter 90. Pages 17 & 23.

responsible official, David R. Myers, c/o Lisa Wrenn, Lands and Special Uses Officer, Weaverville Ranger Station, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, PO Box 1190, Weaverville CA 96093 or fax to (530) 623-6010. Submit hand delivered comments during business hours between 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday excluding holidays. Please submit electronic comments to: comments-pacificsw-shasta-trinity-bigbar-weaverville@fs.fed.us with the subject line ***Revised Ironside Mountain Communication Site Expansion*** on or before June 21, 2014. Acceptable formats for electronic submissions include email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc or .docx) or portable document file (.pdf).

Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection (40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22; Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 21).

After 30 days from the date of this notice, the interdisciplinary team will review all of the scoping comments received that need to be addressed in the proposed action. Scoping comments should be as specific as possible. While comments will be accepted and considered up until the decision is made, timely submission of scoping comments is important for them to be fully considered and incorporated into the proposal. Your input and participation are encouraged.

Sincerely,

/s/ *David R. Myers*
DAVID R. MYERS
Forest Supervisor